Over-aged Coaches

3680. SHRI AJOY MUKHOPADHYAY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that over-aged EMU coaches are more in Howrah, Sealdah and Kharagpur Divisions of Calcutta suburban in comparison to Mumbai suburban;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that due to over-aged coaches frequent break-down are taking place in Calcutta suburban section;

(c) if so, the steps taken to replace the over-aged coaches of Calcutta suburban section; and

(d) the number of new coaches supplied to Calcutta suburban during each of the last three year?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The over-aged EMU stock has been programmed for replacement in a phased manner depending upon availability of new coaches from the manufacturers.

(d) No. of new coaches supplied to Eastern & South Eastern Railways during the last three years are as under:-

Year	ER	SE	Total
1994-95	33	20	53
1995-96	26	18	44
1996-97	119	42	161

Derailment of Hyderabad-New Delhi Express

3681. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :
SHRI G.A. CHARAN REDDY :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether 13 coaches of Hyderabad-New Delhi Express train derailed between Kalhar and Mandi Bamora stations of the Central Railway on June, 15,1997;

(b) if so, the total number of passengers killed and injured;

(c) whether any inquiry has been conducted;

(d) if so, the findings thereof; and

(e) the total loss suffered and the extent to which compensation was given to kith and kin of persons killed/injured in this accident?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b) The engine and 12 coaches trailing immediately after the engine of 2723 Dn Secunderabad New Delhi A.P. Express derailed between Kalhar and Mandi Bamora stations on Bhopal-Bina section of Bhopal division of Central Railway on 16.6.1997. In this accident, 7 passengers sustained grievous injuries and 6 suffered simple injuries.

(c) and (d) The accident has been enquired into by the Commissioner of Railway Safety/Central Circle who has held unknown persons, who wilfully tampered with track and removed fish plates and displaced contiguous short rail in advance of switch expansion joints and continuously welded track thereby causing discontinuity in track alignment, responsible for the accident.

(e) Damage to railway property has been estimated at Rs. 44.75 lakhs. Compensation will be paid soon after the claims are decreed by the Railway Claims Tribunal. No application has been filed by the Claimants so far in the concerned Railway Claims Tribunal. However, an amount of Rs. 36,500 as ex-gratia has been paid to the injured persons in this accident.

Construction of Foot Over Bridge at Garifa Railway Station

3682. SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether platform shelter, foot-over-bridge, seating arrangements have been sanctioned for Garifa Railway station of Eastern Railway;

(b) if so, the reasons for not completing the above works; and

(c) the steps to be taken to complete the above works within a time bound period?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b) A platform shelter and a foot-over-bridge are sanctioned at Garifa at a cost of Rs. 4.23 lakhs & Rs. 7.32 lakhs respectively. These works are progressing as per schedule for completion by 31.3.98 as per target.

Adequate seating arrangement is available on platforms and in waiting hall.

(c) Does not arise.

Varanasi Telecom Scandal

3683. SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "crores siphoned off in Varanasi Telecom Scandal" appearing in the *Indian Express* dated January 8, 1997;

(b) if so, the facts thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether any inquiry has been conducted in the matter;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(e) the number of officials involved in the scandal and action taken against them?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The news item contains different cases like fraudulent collection and payment of telephone bills, illegal transfer of lines to unscrupulous PCO operators, misuse of residential service telephone etc. All such cases are investigated.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e) Departmental investigations have been conducted. On the basis of investigation three officials have been identified to be involved in the case of fraud involving collection and payment for telephone bills. Two of them have been issued chargesheets for major penalty under departmental rules and the case of issuing charge sheet to the third official is under process. Two cases of illegal transfer of lines/misuse by unscrupulous PCO operators have been referred to CBI for thorugh investigation. During investigation one case of misuse of residential service telephone to the tune of Rs. 3 lakh by one telecom official was found and necessary action for recovery is being taken.

[Translation]

Sub Standard Essential Services

3634. SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA :
SHRI KASHIRAM RANA :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the sub standard essential services in Post, Telegraph and telecommunications areas in Gujarat circle ; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government for the improvement in the essential services?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Essential services of the Post, Telegraph and Telecommunication services in Gujarat are generally satisfactory. However, there are occasional instances of delays to mails due to various reasons like natural calamities, transpiration bottlenecks, receipt of sudden and exceptionally heavy volume of mails etc.

(b) Instructions are issued from time to time to the inspecting staff to make surprise visits and through an effective inspection process to monitor and improve mail, delivery arrangements and ensure proper financing of post offices. Transmission and delivery of mails, money orders, telegraph services, Telecommunication services are continuously motored at various levels and corrective measures taken to remove deficiencies. In order to improve quality of services and to give adequate attention to public grievances counter operations in important post offices have been computerised and facilitation counters and Customer care Centres have been opened.

[English].

Use of Old and Dilapidated Coaches

3685. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that old and dilapidated compartments are being used for the trains in Kerala;

(b) if so, the steps being taken by the Government to replace these old bogies;

(c) whether there is any proposal to send new compartments bogies to the State of Kerala; and

(d) if so, the number of bogies proposed to be sent and the time by which they are likely to reach Kerala?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) The coaches used on trains in Kerala are from a younger age group and none of these coaches is overaged. Age profile indicated that more than 70% of coaches running on trains in Kerala are well below mid life.

(b) to (d) About 160 new coaches have been inducted into Kerala region during the first quarter of 96-97. New coaches have been provided on important trains like Kerala Express, Netravati Express etc. Phased replacement of coaches running in Kerala will be continued subject to availability of resources.

Stoppage of Jodhpur Express

3686 . SHRI HARADHAN ROY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to provide stoppage of Jodhpur Express and Bokaro Shatabdi. Express trains at Raniganj and Himgiri Express at Durgapur;

(b) if so, the time by which the said stoppages are likely to be provided; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Availability of alternative services to cater to the present pattern and volume of traffic.